

# River-Friendly Farm Certification Program

*Giving public recognition to farms which protect and enhance the Raritan Basin's rivers, lakes and streams.*

## What is the River-Friendly Farm Program?

The River-Friendly Farm Program was initiated to address water quality concerns within the Raritan River Basin. Many of the streams within the watershed have been assessed as impaired for phosphorus. Phosphorus runoff can be attributed to poor management within agricultural areas. The River-Friendly Farm Program seeks to promote agricultural best management practices through recognition of those farms that, through good management, help to protect water resources within the watershed. Conservation planning assistance will be offered to those farms that do not meet the certifying criteria, but would like to install or adapt the necessary components to become certified as River-Friendly.



Stripcropping, diversions and a grassed waterway prevent soil erosion on this Hunterdon County farm.

## Program Goals

- To publicly recognize and reward farmers who do an outstanding job of managing their farms in an economically and environmentally sound way that protects and improves water resources within the Raritan River Basin.
- Publicize and promote agricultural best management practices that help improve water quality while maintaining and improving agricultural viability of New Jersey farms.
- Increase public awareness of farmers' voluntary contributions to resource protection
- Create new partnerships to begin future regional implementation of the River-Friendly Farm Program

## Benefits of becoming a River-Friendly Farm

- Provides public recognition for implementing and maintaining stewardship practices
- Creates an avenue for increased marketing strategies with River-Friendly Farm label
- Improve water quality in streams while maintaining productive farmland
- Promotes more efficient use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Provides a healthier soil structure

## How to Participate in the River-Friendly Farm Program

Applications are available at USDA Ag Service Centers, Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension Offices, Soil Conservation District Offices, and the North Jersey RC&D Office. Completed applications should be forwarded to the North Jersey RC&D Office. Applications will be evaluated based off of the following criteria:

- Soil loss management
- Nutrient management
- Pest management
- Stream corridor management
- Irrigation water management

If all criteria are not currently met, conservation planning assistance will be made available to the applicant to help them implement the best management practice needed, for the farm to become certified as River-Friendly.

For more information about the River-Friendly Farm certification program contact North Jersey RC&D (908) 735-0733 x125 [www.northjerseyrcd.org](http://www.northjerseyrcd.org)

